

HCDOP Citizens Monitoring Program: integrating a volunteer monitoring effort with the needs of a partnership-based research program

Dan Hannafious, Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group*

Renee Rose, Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group

Keywords: citizens, monitoring, volunteer, marine, water quality, dissolved oxygen

The condition and factors influencing the water quality and biota of Hood Canal is currently under increased scrutiny by researchers, politicians, and citizens. The multi-stakeholder Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen Program (HCDOP) was implemented in January 2005 to determine the sources, processes and impacts of low dissolved oxygen (DO) events in Hood Canal. Prior to the HCDOP program becoming fully established, there became a need to supplement the limited marine data in order to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the seasonal fluxes of the low DO processes. Integrating a citizen monitoring effort in the marine water became an important action that provided invaluable weekly data. The Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group was able to coordinate community volunteers to contribute boat time and sampling time for weekly collection of oxygen samples and CTD casts in seven transects within Hood Canal. The citizen monitoring effort has been supported by state agencies, university programs and local organizations that pooled together resources and knowledge to equip and train the volunteers in standard methods. Engaging local citizens and aiding in their understanding of these local issues, begins to make connections between watershed health and their individual role as long-term stewards to the watershed.